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EU bailouts are over but government pledges to carry on slashing spending >>Page 17

Decades of austerity ahead in Greek tragedy



Socialist Worker

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EXCLUSIVE HOME OFFICE GETS 100 NAMES A WEEK FROM HOSPITAL

USE NHS AND YOU COULD BE DEPORTED

Barts 4th July 2018 statement on Bioterror Environment
(Note: starts below on page 15 (which is also page 18 of 166 in the digital version)
at section TB 30/18 described as Appendix

BARTS HEALTH NHS TRUST
TRUST BOARD MEETING (PART 1)
There will be a meeting of the Trust Board in public on Wednesday 4 July 2018 at 11.00 in the Board Room, Junction 6, Whippy Cross Hospital, Whippy Cross Rd, Leytonstone London E11 1NR. Scheduled to end by 13.30

AGENDA
Please note that this is a Trust Board meeting held in public. In accordance with the Trust's Standing Orders, no filming or recording of the meeting is permitted. There will be an opportunity for questions and comments from members of the public at the end of the meeting.
TB 20/18

4) Sharing information with the Home Office
The Trust has started updating patients' status on the NHS spine at a rate of about 30 a month. The Department of Health shares any charitable status updates on the spine with the Home Office. No clinical information is shared.

The Trust is currently working up to 100 inquiries a week to the Home Office about the immigration status of individual patients. We share demographic information but not clinical information. The immigration status provided by the Home Office enables us to determine if someone is eligible for NHS treatment, and therefore there is no appeal process. The Trust is not charging anyone whose status is being reviewed by the Home Office following the Windrush controversy, and we will await the completion of these case reviews.

Barts Heath NHS trust forced to admit its role (left) Home Office fax to east London doctor demanding patient details (right)



To: [REDACTED]
From: Kathryn Elliott
Date: 05/06/2018
Subject: [REDACTED]
Pages: 1

Family & HR Unit - Non Compliant
Casework
Immigration & Protection Group
UK Visas and Immigration
Level 3, Vulcan House Steel,
8 Millsands, Sheffield, S3 8NU
Email: Kathryn.elliott@ukvisasandimmigration.gov.uk
Tel: 01142873186

Dear Sir/Madam
Please could you confirm that you have the above patient [REDACTED] DOB: [REDACTED] registered at [REDACTED] along with [REDACTED]
DOB: [REDACTED]
Thank you for your assistance
Regards
Kathryn



Dr Jackie Applebee

'I won't be a border guard,' says doctor

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

THE TORIES are trying to use the NHS as a back-door vehicle for deportations. Socialist Worker has seen two examples of how it works—and there are likely to be more.

GP Jackie Applebee is a local medical committee (LMC) rep and health campaigner in Tower Hamlets, east London.

She told Socialist Worker how an east London practice had received a fax from the Home Office's immigration department in April. "It was asking them to confirm if these two people lived at an address," she said.

Barts Health NHS Trust—East London's biggest hospitals trust—has admitted it is making up to 100 enquiries a week to the Home Office about patients.

This means passing patients' "demographic information"—name, date of birth and address—to immigration officials.

The Home Office could then use it to track down migrants it's trying to kick out of Britain.

"This is just another way

>>Page 3



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Cut from prime ministerial cloth'

French newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche on foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt

'It's clever and funny'

Odious Daily Mail columnist Sarah Vine on Islamophobia

'Dog'

Donald Trump on a former female aide Omarosa Manigault Newman after she exposed his reactionary attitudes in a book

'Do you know what #Jamaican #jerk actually is?'

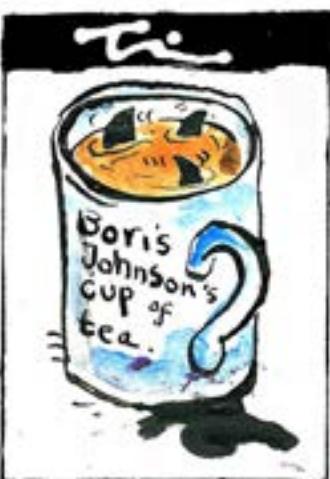
Labour MP Dawn Butler tweeting at Jamie Oliver, who is promoting a "punchy jerk rice" ready meal

'We were all misled on the existence of WMDs'

Former prime minister Gordon Brown says he was lied to about the reasons for war in Iraq. Weren't we all

'Emergency landing on nearby golf course perfect, next to clubhouse'

Former Tory minister Steve Baker on his emergency landing after his parachute didn't open but the reserve did. Better luck next time.



Councils hit homeless people with up to £1,500 in charges

HOMELESS people face being charged up to £1,500 a year by councils to store their possessions.

Fees are imposed on rough sleepers who have turned to local authorities for help.

Tory-run St Albans Council uses a storage company and charges £6 a week to store possessions for homeless residents.

Liberal Democrat Kingston Council, in west London, also charges £6 for removals and a delivery fee of £30.

The bill rises in Lib Dem/Conservative-controlled Hillingdon Council, west London, where it costs £12 to £18.50 per week depending on location.

Lib Dem Watford Council charges a flat fee of £300. Five Labour councils revealed their levies.



HOMELESS HIT with fees

Birmingham charges £15 a month. Kirklees, west Yorkshire, demands £5 a week and £15 each time possessions are moved in or out.

A typical weekly bill in Croydon, south London,

is £15.58. Slough charges £11 plus VAT a week, while in Hackney, east London, it is £10 per week.

The highest charges are in Richmond, west London.

Local Tories revealed plans for an instalment system of

£10 to £30 a week—£1,500 a year.

Other councils charging include Cambridge, Stoke, Ealing, Worcester and Ipswich.

Greg Beales from Shelter said, "People will greet with disbelief the idea that homeless people face the added worry and strain of paying to keep belongings safe."

Maeve McGoldrick from Crisis said, "Losing your home is a devastating experience and having to pay to keep your possessions safe is an added and painful hardship."

"The real issue here is the huge number of people finding themselves homeless in the first place. If we build the right number of homes each year and ensure there is a strong safety net homelessness can be ended for good."

Tories U-turn on women's refuge attack

THE TORIES have abandoned plans to change the way that women's refuges are funded.

Ministers had proposed to remove refuges' last secure form of funding—housing benefit—and devolve housing costs to local authorities.

This would see hundreds of refuge beds permanently removed.

The Women's Aid charity had warned that as many as 600 beds in refuges across England could be at risk and that more than half of all refuges would be forced to scale back their services or close.



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

No. 7652

Leo Goodwin
TransPennine Express

His firm was called the worst train operator in Britain by Network Rail

Goodwin received a £275,000 basic salary, plus £49,000 in pension contributions and a £36,000 bonus last year

That was £16,000 more than he received the year before



MPs get a bigger slice

WE FACE a policing bill of more than £3 million for Donald Trump's visit. The Metropolitan Police spent £2.87 million guarding Trump. The figure does not include his red carpet night at Blenheim Palace, his trip to his Scottish golf course or the cost of policing the huge protest in Trafalgar Square.

Drones bring coffee to make you work harder

DRONES carrying cameras and sensors could buzz around offices of the future delivering coffee to workers who appear to be wan.

The technology has been patented by IBM under the title, "Drone delivery of coffee based on a cognitive state of an individual."

IBM does not simply want to deliver coffees to those who order them. It wants to use biometric sensors and data from other sources to identify people who would benefit from a caffeine fix before they know it themselves.

The patent envisages drones delivering coffee in a "large office complex" based on assessments of workers' electronic calendars; their movements as recorded by their mobile phones; readings such as blood pressure from wearables; and camera footage.

The software may determine that you woke at 5.30 am and started work at 7am, for example. Based on a late night the day before, facial analysis showing that you look groggy and deadlines in your calendar, it could dispatch an urgent double espresso or sack you.



Hologram to speak to Tory conference

CULTURE secretary Jeremy Wright is being lined up to give his speech to the Conservative Party conference as a hologram to make this year's event "less dreary".

The idea was hatched by his predecessor at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Matt Hancock, before he was promoted to health secretary.

Hancock, who has been ridiculed for launching his own app, told friends he was keen to

use hologram technology in his conference speech and had discussed the plan with Brandon Lewis, the Tory party chairman.

Lewis is planning some surprises for this year's conference and apparently wants the event to be "less boring and corporate."

"Instead of there being long-winded speeches from every cabinet minister, some will be invited to hold question and answer sessions instead. We are trying to make conference less dreary."



Volkswagen boss knew of scandal

THE BOSS of car giant Volkswagen has admitted he knew his firm was fiddling diesel exhaust emission tests before the scandal was exposed.

Herbert Diess was told about the existence of rogue software in cars two months before US regulators blew the whistle.

The scandal has cost the company about £22 billion in penalties and fines.

Volkswagen's engineers designed a system to switch on emissions controls when the cars were being tested in the US and turn them off during normal driving.

Senior management had denied wrongdoing.

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Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London
E16 9EJ

Use NHS and you could be deported, migrants told

>>continued from page 1

that we're seeing the Tories' hostile environment for migrants in the NHS," she told Socialist Worker.

"Doctors should not be border guards—and this feeds into deportations."

Barts was part of a pilot scheme of 20 trusts who were checking patients' passports. Many migrants from outside the European Union are not entitled to free health care under the Tories' racist immigration rules.

The three-month pilot ended in October 2017—but Barts has said that it is continuing the practice.

By making migrants fearful of using the NHS, it will mean that they don't go to hospital for the care they need.

"We shouldn't be passing on any details," said Jackie.

"We build our relationships with patients based on trust and that will break down if people fear being deported."

The scandal at Barts is part of a wider pattern of the Home Office trying to get around its U-turn over access to patient information.

Access

The Home Office and NHS Digital had a "Memorandum of Understanding" until the Tories were forced to perform a U-turn in May. The memorandum meant immigration officials could access records of people they were trying to deport.

But the U-turn included a vaguely-worded get-out clause that said the Home Office could still seek information—which means data collection effectively continues.

And, in the case of Barts, the Home Office can cast its net even wider.

If Barts passes on demographic information to check a patients' free care eligibility, there's nothing to stop the Home Office using it for deportations.

"They prey on people's ignorance,"



BARTS HEATH NHS bosses admit they pass patient details to the Home Office

Jackie said. "If a GP practice receives a letter from the Home Office, it can be intimidating. My duty as an LMC rep is to say, no you do not have to comply with this sort of thing."

After seeking Jackie's advice as the LMC rep, the practice didn't pass on the details to the Home Office. "But I know of practices in other areas that have responded with the information," she said.

Charging migrants for care undermines the NHS and is a stepping stone towards charging

everybody for care. And the figures at Barts show that Tories' talk of "health tourism" and migrants draining NHS resources is a racist lie.

Of 8,900 patients checked during the pilot, only 50 were found liable to pay.

Health campaigners across east London have launched an open letter ahead of the trust board's AGM on 11 September.

It demands the trust stop asking patients for ID, suspends upfront charging and stops collaborating

with the Tories' racist "hostile environment".

Unions across the health service need to commit to non-compliance with any checks and to support workers who refuse to carry it out.

As Jackie said, "We should treat everybody—and I would treat everybody."

What's your story?
Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Bettison charges dropped

FORMER SOUTH Yorkshire Police (SYP) chief inspector Sir Norman Bettison will face no charges over allegations that he lied following the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster.

The news will anger survivors of the disaster and friends and relatives of those who died.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died after a crush at the Hillsborough ground in Sheffield.

Bettison was a chief inspector with SYP at the time and had faced four charges of misconduct in public office. He was accused of untruthfully

describing his role in the SYP response as "peripheral" when applying for the job of chief constable in Merseyside.

He was also accused of lying when he said he never tried to blame fans for the disaster.

Bettison's appeal for the charges to be dismissed was due to be heard at Preston Crown Court on Tuesday of this week.

But the CPS told the judge that all charges were being withdrawn.

Five other men are due to face trial for alleged offences relating to the disaster next year.



Norman Bettison

Council care fails children

CHILDREN LOOKED after by local authorities are facing a "silent crisis", new research by the Social Market Foundation thinktank indicates.

Some 65 percent of looked after children are in the care of a local authority that falls short of a good standard.

And of those children 13,790 are receiving care services that are "inadequate"—the lowest ranking.

The findings are a result of data analysis from Ofsted that looked at English councils' services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers.

Experience

Better care is urgently needed for children, as they are already more likely to experience lifelong social and economic problems.

For instance, about 25 percent of the adult prison population had previously been in care—despite only 1 percent of children being looked after.

But instead of improving services, the Tories' attacks on local authorities means that children looked after by councils are bearing the brunt of austerity and cutbacks.

Matthew Oakley, a senior researcher at SMF, said the report shows "these children desperately need the people who are supposed to lead this country to pay more attention and commit to improving children's services.

"We all then have a duty to hold politicians to account to ensure that the support and outcomes for these vulnerable children are improved."

IN THIS WEEK 2005

Hurricane Katrina hits

UP TO 2,000 people died in New Orleans when flood defences failed.

Many couldn't afford to leave, and initially the city refused to offer transport. Some lived in trailer parks for two years after the disaster.

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Mosques attacked in the wake of Tory racism

Boris Johnson's comments gave confidence to racists and fascists, argues Tomáš Tengely-Evans

BACK STORY

Attacks on two mosques last week were another sign of rising levels of Islamophobia in the wake of Boris Johnson's racist rant about Muslim women.

Two mosques in Birmingham were physically attacked last Wednesday night. Ball bearings fired from a catapult smashed through the windows of the Masjid Qamarul Islam and Al Hijra mosques during evening prayers.

The attacks followed the arrest and charging of Salih Khater, whose car hit cyclists and pedestrians and crashed into a security barrier in Westminster on Tuesday of last week.

Khater, a Sundanese-born migrant, is from Birmingham.

Azhar Qayum is the Midlands regional manager for Muslim Engagement and Development. "There is rising Islamophobia in general," he told Socialist Worker. "And it's not just about what happened in Westminster."

"The attacks on the mosques happened in the context of Boris Johnson's comments."

Tory former foreign secretary Johnson said women who choose to wear the burqa look like "letter boxes" and "bank robbers" earlier this month.

Various right wing and some liberal pundits lined up to defend the

- He compared some Muslim women to letter boxes and bank robbers in a newspaper column
- His comments legitimise Islamophobic attacks
- They aren't an aberration—racism is at the heart of the Tory party
- The Tories have reluctantly opened up disciplinary procedures against him

ANTI-RACISTS gathered at Didsbury Mosque, which had been threatened by Nazis

odious bigot's comments. When the likes of Johnson push Islamophobia, it gives confidence to the resurgent forces of the British far right.

Azhar said, "The whole campaign around Tommy Robinson has centred on Islam and Muslims and the far right people who attended the rallies were mainly chanting Islamophobic slogans."

Planned

Supporters of Nazi Tommy Robinson and the racist Democratic Football Lads Alliance had planned to protest outside Didsbury mosque last Sunday. It came after the BBC

alleged that Imam Mustafa Graf had preached "armed jihad" in Iraq and Syria and was linked to one of the Manchester Arena bombers.

The thugs didn't show up after 80 people joined a solidarity picket organised by Stand Up To Racism and Unite Against Fascism.

One woman worshipper at the mosque said, "If you come to our mosques, if you come to our synagogues, if you come to our gurdwaras, if you come to our Temples—then we will be there."

"There was an incident in Leicester where people tried to post letters into a woman's niqab—that comes straight out of Boris Johnson's mind."

Anti-racists need to show solidarity with Muslims whenever there is a racist attack and build opposition to the far right.

And we need to realise that issues such as xenophobia or attacks on Muslims are part of one thing so we're not divided."



On other pages...

Criticising the burqa means lining up with racists >>Page 15

Be ready for Tommy Robinson supporters on the streets

SUPPORTERS OF Tommy Robinson plan to protest outside the Nazi's retrial at the Old Bailey in central London on Tuesday 4 September.

Robinson was freed on bail at the beginning of this month.

Since then he has been bidding his time, sunning himself on the Spanish island resort of Tenerife. His visitors have included German far right leader Lutz Bachmann, who founded the Islamophobic Pegida street movement.

This shows that Robinson remains a focal point for the whole

of the far right—in Britain and internationally.

His supporters managed to organise the largest outdoor mobilisation by fascists in British history on 9 June.

Around 15,000 Nazis, racist populists of Ukip and admirers of Donald Trump and the alt right rallied on Whitehall.

Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) and Unite Against Fascism scored an important breakthrough at the "Free Tommy" rally in central London on 14 July. Some 3,000 anti-racists turned out—the fascists

had shrunk to less than half their previous numbers.

This doesn't mean the threat has gone away. Every far right group is trying to capitalise on the growing support for Robinson.

Anti-racists have called a counter-mobilisation against the fascist English Defence League in September on Saturday 1 September.

The Democratic Football Lads Alliance is using a sexual abuse case in Sunderland to stir up racism against Muslims. SUTR North East and Sunderland Unites have called a counter-mobilisation

for 15 September under the banner, "Justice for survivors—don't let the racists divide us."

If Robinson wins his retrial in

September, it will boost every fascist and racist in Britain. They could march on the weekend of 8-9 September during the "international break"—when there are no major matches between English clubs.

There is another such break on 13 and 14 October.

Anti-racists must be ready to take to the streets when they next try to march.

ACTIVISTS FROM across the left were set to hold a solidarity day in Oxford this Saturday after thugs tried to smash up a Socialist Worker campaign stall.

Socialist Worker sellers in the city were campaigning last Friday against Boris Johnson's racist article about Muslim women wearing the burqa.

Two thugs tried to intimidate us by shouting, shoving and invading people's personal space, tearing newspapers and sweeping books onto the ground. They kicked at the stall and made repeated attempts to grab the megaphone.

While the attack was not necessarily planned, it had all the hallmarks of a fascist attempt to prevent freedom of speech.

And it has implications for any group who wants to campaign for progressive change.

After the attack in Oxford we immediately approached political parties, campaign groups and unions and asked them to come together for a solidarity event. The event is at 11am, Carfax,

Queen Street, Oxford. It has been called by Oxford Stand Up To Racism; Oxford Unite Against Fascism; Oxford Love Music Hate Racism; Oxford Labour Muslim Network; Oxon NASUWT; Oxford Momentum; Oxford Palestine Solidarity Campaign; Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire DWP PCS; Oxford CND and Campaign to Close Campsites with more support expected. Julie Simmons



Anti-racism at Notting Hill Carnival

AROUND TWO million people will party at Notting Hill Carnival in west London across the bank holiday weekend.

Organisers pledged last month to take Carnival "back to its roots" of showing unity against racism. They warned it was in danger of becoming a "market-driven, manufactured commodity".

Matthew Phillip is director of the trust that organises Carnival. He said, "Carnival was born out of local community expression of freedom rather than an advertising opportunity for brands."

Windrush

This shift comes in the wake of Tories' racist treatment of the Windrush Generation of migrants from the Caribbean.

"Carnival was born out of the Windrush Generation," said Phillip. "This year is a good opportunity to raise awareness of it."

At this year's carnival Love Music Hate Racism (LMHR) has teamed up with the Smokey Joe Roadshow and the NEU education union. A report last week found that over 500 are still in custody.

They will have a float and presence next Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday.

NEU members can go for free.

It follows a successful float—joined by around 200 people—put on by LMHR, Smokey Joe and the RMT union at last year's carnival.

To book your ticket go to bit.ly/LMHCarnival

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

RULERS SPOUT RACISM—IT'S TIME FOR RESISTANCE

EVERY WEEK politicians find new ways to wage war on migrants. And they are openly using language designed to encourage racism and violence.

US president Donald Trump this week made comments that echoed Tory Enoch Powell's Rivers of Blood speech in 1968.

Then, Powell warned that continued immigration would lead to race riots in Britain.

This week Trump warned of "terror, bloodshed and suffering" if government officials did not support Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Ice) agents.

Ice enforces the forced separations of families at the US/Mexican border, and the incarceration of migrant children. A report last week found that over 500 are still in custody.

Trump repeatedly portrays migrants as violent criminals. In an event to "salute" Ice officials at the White House on Monday, he said, "We will never surrender our nation to the forces of anarchy and chaos and crime."

"We will not allow our communities to be consumed by deadly poisons and violent predators. The poisons are flowing

across our border." This level of racism is not confined to Trump. Italian interior minister Matteo Salvini was refusing to allow 177 people on board a coastguard ship to disembark on Tuesday.

The refugees and migrants, mostly from Eritrea and Somalia, had been stuck on the Diciotti ship for five days.

Refugees and migrants don't cause crime, poverty or violence—they suffer the brunt of them. But politicians hope to use racism to deflect attention from how their policies have damaged ordinary people's lives, and to divide us against each other.

And their vile racism gives fascist groups more credibility and more confidence.

It is crucial for anti-racists to be organised and active. We need to build Stand Up To Racism and Unite Against Fascism to take on the racists and the fascists.

The likes of Trump are powerful. But he is worried about the widespread resistance to his attacks.

Trump bemoaned what he called "a new wave of anti-borders, anti-law enforcement extremism" this week.

Anti-racists are the majority. We need to use our collective strength to defend migrants and push back racism.

PRISON IS NO SOLUTION

THE CHIEF inspector of prisons has forced ministers into taking Birmingham jail back under state control.

He said this week it had descended into a "state of crisis" with "appalling violence and squalor".

The jail was run by outsourcer G4S, G4S's prisons, immigration detention centres and youth custody services in Britain made £31 million profit last year.

G4S boss in charge of the sector, Peter Neden, took home

£727,000. In contrast inmates who rioted against Birmingham jail's appalling conditions in 2016 were given sentences of up to nine years for mutiny.

There are 82,949 people in 107 state-run jails and 14 that are run privately.

The privatising vultures make prison worse but prison does not work. Locking people up in dungeons of despair doesn't rehabilitate anyone. It institutionalises violence.

And it's the inmates who are at risk.

Half of prisoners overall say they feel unsafe. In inner city prisons that rises to around



Calling time on the racists at Carfax

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Fans of Nazi Robinson will be organising

ANALYSIS

YURI PRASAD

It's not Drill music that drives violence

WHAT MAKES a young person pick up a knife or a gun and attack another?

Two men were killed and four teenagers hurt in separate stabbings in London last week. And shortly after, two children were among ten people hurt in a shooting in Manchester. So you'd hope someone had a clue.

Instead, you'll find that no politician or pundit has the faintest idea. Knowing that victims are disproportionately black and poor does, however, provide them with a ready-made backstory.

They quickly slip into the same old racist stereotypes about black boys and men that have been doing the rounds since before the Empire Windrush landed at Tilbury.

There must be something in "black culture" that drives all of this, they whisper.

Drill music is their latest obsession—but they wouldn't know Drill if it had bored its way into their heads. It's just a phrase they repeat, just as they once did with "Gangster Rap", Garage and Grime.

"And, behind all of this are the gangs," they add.

Few would disagree that gangs are playing a role in the recent spike in violence.

But a recent report into Waltham Forest, north east London, by Southbank University makes interesting reading.

It says that the "postcode gangs" of a decade ago are gone.

These were groups of young people from particular areas, or specific estates, that acted territorially. They patrolled their areas and saw off challenges from other gangs who tried to come on to their patch.

Gang members described an emotional relationship with their locality, leading one young respondent to say that he would "defend anyone who lived in his postcode".

These groups gradually took on specific identities by wearing particular clothing or colours. Rivalry was at the very core of the gang identity and frequently resulted in violent clashes.

Researchers say that this type of organisation has been replaced by a new type that is "focused on the drugs market and driven by a desire for profits".

The leaders of this new school reject all outward signs of gang culture. They don't wear street clothes or things that might identify them, and they have no loyalty to an area—only a desire to control territory because it is a market.

Enterprise

The report says that these type of gangs have moved from a "recreational stage", where illegal activity is merely a by-product, to an "enterprise stage".

Selling drugs becomes an end in itself—the only reason why the gang exists.

The desire to conquer new markets, and make greater profits, drives the gangs to recruit youngsters from the estates to sell in the satellite towns that surround the capital.

This has drawn in a large number of young women who are sent off with drugs and money in the knowledge that they are less likely to be stopped by the police.

One person interviewed said the new gangs were "almost like a franchise".

"[It's] like McDonalds or Benetton where the [the gang] have got a very effective pyramid structure, business plan, but instead of burgers and woolly jumpers it's Class A drugs and cannabis."

However, one former gang member explained how business alliances between gangs could be unstable.

"One minute you're friends, the next minute you're not," he said.

He went on to describe how, when things were difficult, gang members can turn on each other.

"Even within a tight circle, when things are getting hard, there's not enough money coming through, maybe there's been a drought with the drugs—no weed coming in—they will, literally, look at who's in their circle and think, 'Who can we rob?'... 'Who can we get rid of?' In their own circle."

And when business rivalries turn vicious, it's the gang's lowest rung, the workers on the street, who pay the price—sometimes with their lives.

It turns out that the new gangs, far from being something "foreign" to the system, are in fact the very embodiment of capitalism.



Cop who restrained Rashan Charles cleared by watchdog

by SADIE ROBINSON

A COP who restrained a 20 year old black man shortly before he died has been cleared of misconduct.

The officer, known as BX47, hauled Rashan Charles to the floor of a shop in Hackney, east London, in the early hours of 22 July last year.

He died soon after. The restraint was captured on CCTV and led to angry protests.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) last Wednesday found that BX47 had not done his job properly. But the cops' pet watchdog cleared him of misconduct.

The IOPC said BX47 was "responsible for some basic failings" that represented "a failure to perform his role satisfactorily".

It said BX47's restraint technique was "unorthodox". But it added that the officer faced "difficult, stressful and exhausting" circumstances and said, "BX47 did his best."

Scotland Yard initially said Rashan had been "trying to swallow an object".

Concern

It was widely implied that Rashan was trying to swallow drugs in order to undermine concern about his death.

Family friend Awa told Socialist Worker hours after Rashan's death, "They're already painting him as just a drug dealer."

"The cops are useless, they just target people, not just black people, for no reason—and it always ends up this



RASHAN CHARLES who died after being restrained (above) Rashan's father Esa (left)

PICTURE GUY SMALLMAN

way. He had a child. Now that child will have to grow up without a father."

A post-mortem examination later found that a package in Rashan's throat "clearly contributed" to the package getting lodged in his throat.

BX47 will continue as a police officer. Metropolitan Police Deputy Assistant Commissioner Richard Martin said the IOPC investigation

"has identified some learning to take forward for BX47 and this will be progressed".

He claimed that BX47 could have done nothing to save Rashan's life.

But expert medical witness Jasmeet Soar told an inquest into Rashan's death earlier this year that his life could have been saved had CPR been started sooner.

Tackled

He said the way that BX47 tackled Rashan to the ground "clearly contributed" to the package getting lodged in his throat.

The inquest said BX47 didn't follow procedures by taking "immediate and appropriate action in the face of a medical emergency".

BX47 also failed to turn on his body-worn camera.

The inquest found that Rashan's death was "accidental".

In a statement Rashan's family said they felt the inquest was "a predetermined process by the IOPC, the Metropolitan Police and the CPS".

The family added that two expert witnesses on restraint had "75 years combined service in the Metropolitan police, and one still serving. This appears to us neither objective, independent or impartial."

Got a story?
Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Woman 'sets fire to herself' in housing office

A WOMAN reportedly set fire to herself in a London housing office on Wednesday of last week. The incident took place in an office of Tory-run Barnet council.

A parent of an eyewitness said, "My daughter took her mother to an appointment at Barnet Council housing office.

"When they left the room they saw flames in front of them in the waiting room. A woman had set fire to herself.

"Everybody was just turfed out. She said that



Barnet House

those outside were in severe shock but left to their own devices."

The Metropolitan Police gave a statement to the Skwawkbox blog.

It said police were called by the London Ambulance Service to Barnet House after "reports of a female suffering from burns injuries".

"A female in her 50s was taken to a London hospital before being transferred to a specialist burns unit in Essex.

"She remains in a critical but stable condition."



Union heads must back Corbyn over Palestine

Trying to compromise with the right over Labour's position on Israel will damage the left—and Palestinians

CWU UNION leader Dave Ward has spoken out in defence of Jeremy Corbyn. In a statement issued last Friday, Ward slammed those who have smeared Corbyn.

It comes after the leaders of four major Labour-affiliated trade unions called on the party to accept a definition of antisemitism that stifles criticism of Israel.

Ward said, “I'll keep supporting an agenda that ends the housing crisis and homelessness, puts our NHS back together, protects education services, takes back control of our public services, delivers a new deal for workers and creates a society for the millions not the millionaires.

“Jeremy Corbyn is the leader of this agenda and that's why the CWU stands with him.”

Yet Ward said nothing about the focus of the attacks—which is Corbyn's refusal to accept that it's antisemitic to call Israel a racist state.

Enemies of Corbyn are demanding that Labour adopts a definition of antisemitism that rules out describing Israel as “a racist endeavour”.

This comes from an example of antisemitism attached to a definition set by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA). Now major union leaders and some of his allies on the left are also calling on him to back down.

Funder

Last week Len McCluskey, general secretary of Unite—Labour's biggest funder—called on the party to adopt that example.

He rightly pointed out “that very example has been explicitly cited by pro-Israel campaigners, including Labour MPs, in urging the government to ban ‘Israeli apartheid’ events at colleges”.

Yet he still said Labour should adopt it “so the party can move on”.

Union leaders wield a lot of power inside the Labour Party and have representatives on the

BACK STORY

Right wingers are gunning for Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

- They have honed in on his support for Palestine to try and paint him as antisemitic
- Some union leaders have said Corbyn should give in to the right and curb his criticism of Israel
- But CWU union leader Dave Ward last week came out to publicly back him
- Making concessions to the right only emboldens them—Corbyn should stand firm

party's ruling national executive committee.

The committee now seems likely to accept the example when it meets on 4 September thanks to the votes of the Unite, GMB, Usdaw and Unison unions. Ward left it unclear which way the CWU would vote.

Some of Corbyn's supporters have talked of finding a way to adopt that definition but with a caveat that allows for criticism of Israel's creation.

As McCluskey hinted, they hope that this will put an end to the attacks. It won't.

For weeks Corbyn has faced intense personal attacks designed to make him include that example in Labour's own definition of antisemitism.

Labour already adopted the IHRA definition—along with almost all of its examples—in a code of conduct on antisemitism published in July.

The only omission was whether it is antisemitic to call Israel racist—and Corbyn was attacked viciously for it.

The right made it clear they won't accept any attempt to change the example so that it protects criticism of Israel.

On other pages...

The Black September massacre of 1970 >> Pages 10&11

JEREMY CORBYN is a long-time supporter of the Palestinians

It's Margaret Hodge who has peddled racist rhetoric, not the Labour leader

RIGHT WING Labour MP Margaret Hodge directly linked support for Palestine to accusations of antisemitism, in an interview last week.

Speaking to the right wing Sky News, Hodge appeared to repeat her slanderous claim that Jeremy Corbyn is antisemitic.

And she linked it to his support for the Palestinians.

“It's a very fine line between being pro-Palestinian and the Palestinian cause and being antisemitic,” said Hodge.

“And I think he's gone the wrong side of that line.”

Hodge also blamed Corbyn's anti-establishment credentials and mass support for antisemitism. She even compared his support to that of Donald Trump and the far right.

Scary

“I think it's a bit scary,” she said. “We've got this growth of populism—whether it's Trump, whether it's Boris Johnson, and now whether it's the cult of Corbynism—which allows these sort of attitudes to emerge.”

Her list of examples didn't include the growth of actual racist and far right street movements,

such as the one forming around Nazi Tommy Robinson.

Hodge stirred up Labour's row over antisemitism last month when she shouted in Corbyn's face that he was “a fucking antisemite and a racist”.

Corbyn is a lifelong anti-racist who has joined protests against Nazi groups such as the National Front, British National Party (BNP) and the English Defence League.

In contrast Hodge adopted the racist rhetoric of the BNP in 2006 when she claimed white people were angry at “black and ethnic minority communities moving in”.

She also called for “indigenous” people to have priority on council house waiting lists.

Hodge initially faced disciplinary action for her attack on Corbyn. But the investigation was dropped—leaving her free to say whatever she likes.

But the really insidious comparison was the one that linked the antisemitism of Nazi Germany to support for Palestine.

The accusations of antisemitism have always been about discrediting support for Palestine.

The point is to link criticism of Israel to antisemitism.

That becomes more open and overt every time Corbyn backs down.

That's why the right are so desperate for Labour to adopt the IHRA example of antisemitism that rules out calling Israel a racist state.

Cleansing

It would make it almost impossible to talk about the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians that accompanied Israel's creation in 1948.

It would also mean Labour members couldn't describe Israel's foundation as racist.

If Labour adopts that example it will be used against Labour members who call Israel racist, or campaign for a boycott of Israel.

Any criticism of Israel that goes beyond condemning particular actions of its government could see Labour members having to answer charges of antisemitism.

Labour's shift on the question would be used by Israel's supporters in the universities and the unions to demand stifling of pro-Palestine activity.

That's why it is crucial to stand confidently against the attacks on Palestine solidarity and on Corbyn.

Anger at the response to the floods hitting India

by CHARLIE KIMBER

MORE THAN 350 people have died and 1.5 million been forced to move by flooding in the southwest Indian state of Kerala.

Heavy rains began on 8 August and continued up to this week. It is Kerala's worst disaster since 1924.

Some 680,000 people are sheltering in relief camps and thousands of others are on high ground in areas cut off by floods. Supplying food, medicine and clean water is a growing challenge for authorities.

Many of the deaths came when villages were wiped out by landslides.

Authorities said the floods had destroyed tens of thousands of houses, submerged 40,000 hectares of farmland—including those growing tea, rubber and other commodities—and damaged 83,000 kilometres of roads.

There is a huge danger that water-borne diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid, diarrhoea and leptospirosis (Weil's disease) could take more lives.

Devastation

The devastation once again underlines South Asia's vulnerability to flooding due to changes in rainfall patterns linked to climate change.

A World Bank report this year warned that the region's megacities, including Mumbai—urban area population 20 million—and Dhaka—urban area population 18 million—in Bangladesh, appeared increasingly vulnerable as a result of rising average temperatures.

Ecologist Madhav Gadgil claimed on Monday that the floods and landslides are a "man-made disaster" as, in addition to the increased rainfall, illegal constructions on river beds and unauthorised stone quarrying also made conditions worse.

When the downpours began earlier this month, state authorities assured people that the situation was under control.

But rainfall was more than two-and-a-half times heavier than usual in the week to 15 August and 457 percent more than average in the worst-hit district of Idukki.

Right wing Indian prime

BACK STORY

Over a million people have been displaced and more than 350 have died in the worst flooding in a century in southern India's Kerala

- The downpours that started on 8 August have triggered floods and landslides and caused homes and bridges to collapse
- Right wing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been criticised for not supplying enough aid to an area run by the left
- There have been a number of protests across India at the lack of adequate response

minister Narendra Modi, has said the national government will provide less than half the amount of aid the state government said is needed.

He took a helicopter flight over the devastated region, but there have been far too few helicopters flying rescue and relief missions.

Kerala is run by a leftist coalition and Modi has been criticised for giving only meagre relief to a state ruled by his opponents.

Students in several parts of India have held vigils and protest against the central government's lack of response.

In Kerala there have been angry protests against profiteering. They have won cancellation of food price rises.

While the authorities dither, ordinary people are doing their best to help.

Thousands of people collected food, medicine and clothes to be sent to the relief camps.

Around 600 fisherfolk from the Kerala coast are also involved in saving flood victims.

They are estimated to have rescued over 16,000 people.

"The bulk of the credit for the rescue goes to the ordinary citizens," said one local official.

"People have been sharing whatever they had."



On other pages...

Syriza agrees to decades of Greek austerity >>Page 17

RESCUING PEOPLE in the Kerala floods

ITALY

Politicians look to profit from collapse

THE MOTORWAY bridge that collapsed last week in Genoa, Italy failed because of money.

Engineering experts repeatedly raised the alarm that the structure was deteriorating dangerously.

"The Morandi Bridge is a failure of engineering," said Antonio Brencich, a professor of engineering at the University of Genoa.

He added that the bridge's deficiencies were evident to everyone not just to experts.

As the death toll rose to 43, politicians joining 5,000 mourners were branded

"robbers and assassins" Head of the Democratic Party Maurizio Martina had led the majority party in the Italian government for five years, until being defeated last month.

He was met with cries of "clown" and "shame". Only 19 of the victims were honoured at the state ceremony. Other families had refused to take part.

Ministers from Italy's new ruling coalition, which only took power in June, were cheered as they arrived.

Yet The Five Star Movement (M5S), which is the largest part of Italy's new governing had

opposed plans to update or replace the bridge.

The M5S wrote off safety fears about the bridge as children's fiction.

Giuseppe Conte, the Italian M5S prime minister, and far right interior minister Matteo Salvini have said the culprit is European Union (EU) austerity. The EU cuts were real.

But spending choices made by the right in Italy makes the culprits for the disaster closer to home.

But the right wing government hope to capitalise on the disaster.

PALESTINE

Israel kills in run-up to deal

ISRAEL has ramped up the pressure further on Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, despite reports of an imminent peace deal.

Palestinians living there have endured months of sporadic airstrikes and killings of protesters by Israeli soldiers.

The Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip also

means Palestinians live under conditions of humanitarian crisis.

Now Palestinian resistance group Hamas, which governs the Gaza Strip, looks close to agreeing a ceasefire with Israel to end the latest skirmishes.

Negotiations are reportedly brokered by the Egyptian

government—a sign of its growing influence over Hamas.

Yet despite this, Israel closed its only pedestrian crossing with Gaza on Sunday to punish its residents for protesting along the border fence on Friday.

Israeli soldiers killed two protesters on the same day.

FIGURE IT OUT

51 years Israel has occupied Gaza after invading in 1967

2 people killed last Friday by Israel as 20,000 people protested

270 people injured last Friday by Israel

170 people killed by Israel since March, while 18,000 have been injured

Rowan's rubbish

COMEDIAN Rowan Atkinson approves of Boris Johnson ridiculing Muslim women who choose to wear the burqa.

Atkinson has come a long way since he was part of an alternative comedy movement. It rejected the ubiquitous racism and sexism of the established circuit in the 1970s.

Johnson's jibes could have come straight out of the repertoire of the odious racist comedian Bernard Manning of that period.

Sasha Simic
 East London

We will not be silenced

THE ATTACKS on Jeremy Corbyn and the left serve three main purposes.

They put Corbyn and the left on the defensive, and attempt to silence critics of Israel. And they distract the public from the shambles of the Tories.

Fear of being labelled antisemitic must not silence us from speaking out about the atrocities in Israel.

Criticising Israel's treatment of Palestinians is not antisemitic. It is humanitarian and many Jewish people are also critical of Israel's actions.

Pauline Wheat-Bowen
 Palestine Solidarity Campaign
 Huddersfield

Don't fall into traps

THOSE OF us who are standing up to the right's antisemitism smears need to think carefully about how we respond.

Sometimes people can fall into traps that weaken our argument.

After the right attacked Corbyn for appearing to defend an antisemitic mural, some foolishly defended the mural. Not giving an inch to the right's smears doesn't mean having to defend it.

Saying an "Israeli lobby" influences British foreign policy isn't helpful either.

The far right use terms like "Jewish lobby" as racist code. And the West backs Israel because it's part of its foreign policy goal of dominating the region.

Julia Ryder
 Worcestershire



Just a thought...
Fascism isn't a disability
 YET AGAIN the left displays an appalling lack of awareness around mental health disability. I read on social media comments made about the far right attack on socialist bookshop Bookmarks in London (Socialist Worker, 8 August). Some people made comments about the mental health of the fascists. Stop this bloody infuriating crap! You can be a fascist who has a mental health disability, but you are not a fascist because you have a mental health disability.

John Curtis
 Suffolk

Back election reformers

I URGE Labour members to vote for those who are in favour of electoral reform in the forthcoming elections to the party's national executive committee.

Labour has spent two thirds of the past 100 years in opposition—electoral reform will remedy that.

Peter Gregson
 Edinburgh

Cladding still unchecked

MANY TOWER blocks around the country—and there are lots of them—still haven't even been properly checked after the Grenfell Tower fire.

This flammable cladding is also on many hospitals and other public places.

Unfortunately the government and councils don't care. It's about cutting corners to save pennies, all to the detriment of the people.

This is Britain now—profit before people.

Melanie Powell
 On Twitter

Fracking fears of the Tories

THE TORIES have temporarily stopped asking the public if they are for or against fracking.

Polls since 2015 have shown that more people oppose it than support it.

The Tories are nervous as the first fracking operation in seven years is due to start.

Jacqueline West
 Manchester



GMB UNION members on a Palestine solidarity protest in Brighton

who sees what's happening in Palestine—including union members—is going to be sympathetic.

Trade unions should show support for Corbyn's position on Palestine.

A UCU union member
 South Wales

I MARCHED with thousands of other people in solidarity with Palestinians after Israel bombed Gaza in 2014.

When Jeremy Corbyn stands up for the rights of Palestinians, we welcome it.

Among the people who marched against the bombing were members of my union, Usdaw. And I know many Usdaw members disagree with accepting the whole

IHRA definition of antisemitism, because it silences solidarity with Palestine. Criticism of Israel is vital.

Among the union leaders who called on Corbyn to sign up to it was my union's general secretary Paddy Lillis.

The idea of a left wing government frightens the right wing union leadership.

Corbyn supports Palestinian rights—and that's in contradiction to what the right in the Labour Party stands for.

There's a lot of support for Corbyn among our members and the left inside Usdaw is growing.

What he says about Palestine chimes with a lot of people.

Laila Hasan
 Greater Manchester

LOST WITHIN the row over Jeremy Corbyn's visit to Palestinian graves is a bloody and tragic story of oppression and resistance. Corbyn's enemies and supporters spent days last week arguing over the details of his participation in a memorial for Palestinians in Tunisia in 2014.

The facts point to a more complex truth about Palestinian history than those attacking Corbyn care to explain.

In September 1972 a small band of Palestinian fighters took 11 Israeli athletes hostage just ahead of the Olympic Games in Munich, West Germany.

All the hostages were killed during a botched rescue attempt by the police (see right).

In the aftermath, the press described the Palestinians much like they did last week—as irrational murderers, only motivated by hate. Just as now, few of them wanted to talk seriously about why Palestinians might look to terror as a way to win freedom.

Yet the name of the organisation that carried out the attack—Black September—gives a clue to the history that lay behind it.

Exactly two years earlier, in September 1970, thousands of Palestinians living in Jordan were killed in a brutal military assault by the Jordanian government. It's one of many massacres that have been inflicted on the Palestinians over more than a century.

The target of the assault was the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)—a coalition of Palestinian factions committed to armed guerrilla struggle against Israel.

Israel robbed the Palestinians of their land when it was created in 1948 and when it invaded the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip in 1967.

Inspiration

Millions of Palestinians now live in poverty and refugee camps in the surrounding states, including some two million in Jordan. The PLO fought for the right of Palestinians to return to all of Palestine, to live in a single, secular state.

The regular Arab armies of Syria, Jordan and Egypt had been defeated by Israel in the 1967 Six Day War. But the successes of the PLO guerrillas became a beacon of resistance for Palestinians, and an inspiration to ordinary people across the Middle East.

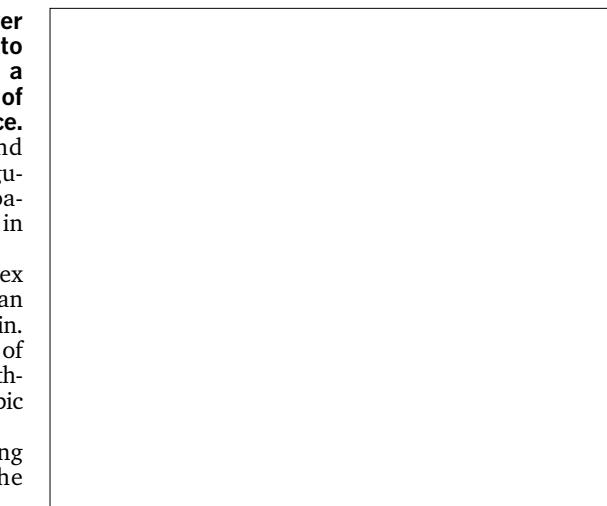
In March 1968—less than a year after the Six Day War—Israel attacked the Jordanian town of Karameh, where the PLO had a base.

The Jordanian government wanted the PLO to withdraw before the attack. The PLO refused. Instead a few hundred guerrillas stayed and fought, drawing the Jordanian army into the battle and forcing Israel to retreat.

Israel had hoped to smash the PLO—but the battle had turned the PLO into heroes.

The PLO continued with the uneasy support of the Jordanian government and other Arab leaders. But as the organisation—and support for the Palestinian cause—grew, it became more of a threat to the rule of Jordanian King Hussein (see column).

Armed and supported by Israel and the US, Hussein launched a civil war against the PLO. Thousands of Palestinians were killed and the PLO was driven out of Jordan, relocating to Lebanon. The defeat was a



looking for ways to be accepted as legitimate negotiating partners among the rulers of Western states that had supported Israel against them.

One big consequence of this was that they came to abandon the goal of reclaiming all of the lost Palestinian land.

They were tempted with the prospect of a “mini state”—something rejected by the poorest Palestinians in the refugee camps, and which they have never been granted.

Other Palestinians turned to desperate and daring acts of “terror”—hijackings, bombings and hostage takings—in small clandestine groups.

Violence

Through mass revolts and armed struggles, Palestinians had fought first the British Empire, then Israel and the US imperialism that propped it up. Each time they had been brutally repressed.

Now some of them tried to hurl back just a fraction of the violence that had been dealt out to them for decades.

Palestinian fighters from the PLO formed a new group in 1970. They called it Black September, after the defeat in Jordan. At first their aim was to take revenge against Hussein and the Jordanian monarchy. But they soon took up the struggle against Israel.

PLO leaders denied they had anything to do with the Black September group. But some Black September members claimed they were overseen by the PLO.

At the very least there was an ambiguous relationship between the two. PLO members that wanted to fight could join Black September while Fatah leaders kept a respectable distance.

It was a sign of the confusion inside the Palestinian resistance after the defeat in Jordan.

Either way it was futile. For all the shock, outrage and attention Black September's actions brought, they couldn't defeat US imperialism which gripped the Middle East and underpinned their oppression.

It wasn't until the First Intifada—a mass uprising—erupted in Palestine in 1987 that liberation once again seemed possible.

But in the 1970s, as now, the reaction of Western governments and the press to Palestinian violence reeked of hypocrisy.

Just three days after the Munich attack, Israel bombed refugee camps and villages in Lebanon and Syria as punishment, killing 70.

None of the newspapers condemned the tragic massacre.



Palestinians had fought the British, then Israel and the US imperialism that propped it up

The media is using the Black September group's hostage-taking of Israeli athletes in 1972 to attack Jeremy Corbyn. Nick Clark looks at the history of massacre, defeat and betrayal in the fight for Palestinian liberation that led to it

THE BLACK SEPTEMBER MASSACRE 1970



A helicopter is blown up during the Munich seige

Munich hijack was attempt to free Palestinian prisoners

THE MEDIA'S description last week of the attack in Munich focused on the murderousness and brutality of the Black September “terrorists”.

Black September were called “Jew killers”—as if their aim was to kill the Israeli athletes simply because they were Jewish.

Actually the athletes were taken hostage by Black September.

The idea was to use them to bargain for the release of hundreds of Palestinians locked up in Israeli prisons.

Black September demanded a plane to take them and the hostages to Egypt. They were allowed to travel with the hostages to a nearby airbase by helicopter. West German police replaced the crew of the waiting

plane with their own officers.

But when the Palestinians arrived, the police aboard the plane decided they were outnumbered and backed out of their planned ambush.

When police snipers fired on the Palestinians it launched a gun battle in which all the hostages were killed.

At first the papers reported that all the hostages had all escaped safely. West German police allowed that story to run for more than two hours after the fighting had finished.

It was better than the embarrassing truth that their botched operation had led to the deaths of the hostages. It's a point that's missing from most versions of the story in the media today.



Oppressed have right to resist

PEOPLE WHO support the Palestinian resistance are always called on to unequivocally condemn the Palestinians if they use violence when fighting back.

Mealy mouthed Labour MPs rush to speak out against violence on “both sides,” as they did when Israel massacred scores of protesters in Gaza this year.

But when forced to focus on violence by Israel, those who condemn the Palestinians scramble to find excuses and justifications. The same goes for the actions of Britain and its other allies around the globe.

Then we're told Israel “has a right to defend itself”—a right the Palestinians seemingly aren't allowed.

Corbyn claimed he was working to find peace and dialogue when he visited a Palestinian conference in Tunisia in 2014. But as his enemies pointed out, he has always sided

with the Palestinians.

Richard Angell, director of the right wing Labour faction Progress, accused Corbyn of wanting “victory for one side over the other”.

The easy answer to that should be, yes—he does.

Israel is a powerful state—armed and funded by the US and Britain—that has violently oppressed the Palestinians for more than 70 years.

The Palestinians fighting back are resisting that oppression.

Anyone who's against injustice—as Corbyn has been for all of his political life—wants the victory of the Palestinians over Israel.

That's why Corbyn spent time with Palestinians, and unlike most Labour politicians has always stood on their side. His record on that is partly why he has such wide support among Labour members.

He shouldn't be ashamed of that.

THE PLO

Relying on Arab states that were in hock to Western interests

THE PLO'S defeat in Jordan was down to the fact that its leadership relied on the support of Arab rulers—and not mass action by ordinary people—to win freedom.

Fatah's founders were mostly wealthier middle class Palestinians who had become business owners, government officials and professionals in Gulf Arab states.

They weren't the same as the millions of Palestinians in the refugee camps.

Their plan was to wage a national liberation struggle to set up a Palestinian state much like the other Arab states in the region. They relied on the support of Arab governments.

The problem was that many of those rulers had ties with the US and Britain, which dominated the Middle East.

The US and Britain need Israel to prop up their power in the region. Israel couldn't have existed or expelled the Palestinians without their support and funding.

Problem

Fatah wanted to make sure the PLO never interfered with the rule of other Arab governments.

This broke down in Jordan, where a huge proportion of the population was of Palestinian origin.

Fatah wouldn't organise struggles among Jordan's two million refugees—who lived in poverty in camps—against the Jordanian government which treated them as a problem.

Yet as the PLO grew, it was dragged into confrontation with the Jordanian regime. The PLO ran its own army, its own welfare and administration, and governed in the refugee camps. It was effectively a “state within a state” that threatened the authority of the Jordanian regime.

Challenge

The PLO had mass support among Palestinians and some Jordanians. Under the flourishing resistance movement, Palestinians began raising their own demands against the Jordanian government.

Factions in the PLO raised the slogan “all power to the resistance”—a challenge to the Jordanian state.

If this had gone ahead, it would have shaken Arab rulers across the region—and meant a direct confrontation with the US imperialism that underpinned Palestinian oppression.

Instead Fatah held back until it was too late. When it was eventually pushed into endorsing a general strike for Palestinian representation in Jordan's government, King Hussein sent loyal battalions of Jordan's army to crush the PLO in the refugee camps.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER }

BRANCH MEETINGS
Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

ABERDEEN**What would a revolution look like?**

Wed 29 Aug, 6pm, Belmont Cinema Cafe, 49 Belmont St, AB10 1JS

BARNSLEY**The need for a revolutionary party**

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, YMCA, Blucher St, S70 1AP

BOLTON**Pakistan and protests for change—can elections deliver change?**

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Bolton Socialist Club, 16 Wood St (off Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRIGHTON & HOVE**After the First World War—did the Treaty of Versailles lead to conflict resolution?**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, Ship St, BN1 1AF

BRISTOL**Fascism and the rise of the far right—how do we fight it?**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, YHA, 14 Narrow Quay, BS1 4QA

BURNLEY AND PENDLE**Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Red Triangle Cafe, 160 St James's St, BB11 1NR

CARDIFF**Politics of the mind—Marxism and mental distress**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Cathays Community Centre, Cathays Terrace, CF24 4HX

CHESTERFIELD**Why does capitalism need borders?**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Chesterfield Library, New Beetwell St, S40 1QN

COLCHESTER**Capitalism vs the climate**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Hythe Community Centre, 1 Ventura Drive, CO1 2FG

DONCASTER**The struggle for LGBT+ liberation**

Tue 28 Aug, 7.30pm, Railway Hotel, West St, DN1 3AA

DUNDEE**The Rohingya crisis—one year on**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Dundee Voluntary Action, 10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

Breakfast in RED

Sign up to our morning newsletter Breakfast in Red and get the latest news every day.

For updates and analysis on the stories that matter go to socialistworker.co.uk/breakfastinred

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS**The Brexit crisis—how do we get rid of the Tories?****LONDON: ISLINGTON**

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, The Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton St, N7 6QT

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Epainos Church, Lichfield Rd, E3 5AT

NORWICH

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Vauxhall Centre, Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

ROTHERHAM

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Talbot Lane Methodist Church Centre, Moorgate St, S60 2EY

WIGAN

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, Little Fifteen pub, 17-19 Wallgate (opposite Wigan Post Office), WN1 1LD

EDINBURGH**Fascism and the rise of the far right—how do we fight it?**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Friends Meeting House, 7 Victoria St, EH1 2JL

GLASGOW**Trump—trade wars and real wars**

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, Avant Garde, 33-44 King St, Merchant City, G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD**Going beyond the binary—Marxism, gender and trans politics**

Wed 29 Aug, 6.30pm, Brian Jackson House, 2 New North Parade, HD1 5JP

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE**Corbyn, Labour and the fight for socialism**

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, The Swarthmore Education Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square, LS3 1AD

LONDON: HACKNEY**Aretha Franklin and the Civil Rights Movement**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, The Round Chapel, 2 Powerscroft Rd (corner Lower Clapton Rd), E5 0PU

LONDON: HARINGEY**From British heat waves to Greek fires—capitalism vs the climate**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, St John Vianney Church Hall, 386 West Green Rd (corner Vincent Rd), N15 3QH

LONDON: LEWISHAM**Marx@200—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Deptford Lounge, 9 Giffin St, SE8 4RH

LONDON: NEWHAM**Capitalism and fashion—what will you wear to the revolution?**

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Stratford Advice Arcade, 107-109 The Grove (next to Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

LONDON: SOUTH**Sexism and the system—#MeToo and women's fightback**

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Vida Walsh Centre, 2b Saltoun Rd (near Effra Rd, facing Windrush Sq), Brixton, SW2 1EP

LONDON: WEST**Why Israel is a racist state**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Woodlane Community Centre, 78 White City Cl, Shepherd's Bush, W12 7DZ

LUTON**Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Stockwood Hotel, 41-43 Stockwood Cresc (enter via London Rd car park), LU1 3SS

MANCHESTER: CENTRAL**100 years since the German Revolution**

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm, Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount St, M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE**Racism and the rise of the far right across Europe**

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, Commercial Union House, 39 Pilgrim St, NE1 6QE

OXFORD**Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Restore Building, Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH**From British heat waves to Greek fires—capitalism vs the planet**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Somerset Community Centre, River's St, PO5 4EZ

SCARBOROUGH**Why does capitalism love plastic?**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Tap and Spile, 94 Falsgrave Rd, YO12 5AZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE**Where will we live? Britain's housing crisis**

Thu 30 Aug, 7pm, Central United Reformed Church, 60 Norfolk St (near Crucible Theatre), S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON**Marxism and mental health**

Wed 29 Aug, 7.30pm, Central Baptist Church Hall, Devonshire Rd, SO15 2GY

SWANSEA**Who were Joe Hill and the Wobblies?**

Thu 30 Aug, 7.30pm, Brynmill Community Centre, St Albans Rd, SA2 0BP

{ MOVEMENT EVENTS }**DORSET****Fight the alt right**

Sun 9 Sep, 1.30pm, Colliton Club, Colliton Park, DT1 1XJ

LONDON**Love Music Hate Racism float at Notting Hill Carnival**

Sun 26 and Mon 27 Aug, Tickets available at bit.ly/2uB7L5A

NATIONAL**Confronting racism and fascism—international conference**

Sat 20 Oct, 10am-5.30pm Friends House, Euston Road, NW1 2NB. Hosted by Stand Up To Racism Go to bit.ly/RacismConference

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Powerful pictures of black achievement and resistance

An exhibition of photographs about black British life shows the gear change from first arrival to first resistance against racism, writes **Harold Wilson**

WHEN NEIL Kenlock started taking photographs he had a clear mission in mind.

He said, "The images of black people I was seeing were not up to standard. They had no charisma, no strength.

"I decided then that I would never photograph anyone I didn't see strength and determination in."

Since the 1960s Kenlock has been true to his intention and his lens has been a persistent witness of black British lives.

The spread of his work is testament to a photographer intent on documenting the fullest range of struggle, achievement and everyday life of post Windrush migration.

So in this collection there are a number of quiet and less celebrated "firsts".

Regalia

Trade union activist Randolph Beresford is pictured adorned with the mayoral regalia that accompanied the post he occupied for the London borough of Hammersmith in 1975.

Beresford was a pivotal figure in a fundraising drive to secure justice for Kelso Cochrane, whose racist murder in 1959 triggered the birth of the Notting Hill carnival.

There's a looming portrait of Baron Pitt of Hampstead, a campaigner against racial discrimination, magistrate and chair of the Greater London Council.

This civil rights activist would later be elected president of the British Medical Association.

Yet the most arresting images are those that strike a marked contrast to



BLACK PANTHER members Elizabeth Obi (left) and Olive Morris

the pleasantries and deportment of the first generation migrants.

This is spectacularly demonstrated in a 1976 photograph of three Rastafarians. Their rigid locks speak total defiance.

"They were concerned about

culture and how they saw themselves.

"They had rejected the church, society generally and they decided to create their own god, their own institutions for their own needs," Kenlock explained when interviewed by Socialist Worker.

Another seminal image dates from 1974 in the offices of West Indian World, the first nationwide black newspaper.

Amid overrun in-trays and typewriters at the rear of the room there hangs a print of Olaudah Equiano, the eighteenth century writer and abolitionist.

Leila Howe Hassan, a member of Black Unity and Freedom Party and editor of Race Today, is being interviewed by Barbara Bees.

Bees was a member of the British Black Panthers. Kenlock says, "The movement in the UK was about educating people.

"They were the first to understand the system, capitalism and how people looked at racism and discrimination."

Bees was also one of the Mangrove Nine whose 1971 trial following police raids and harassment saw campaigner Darcus Howe's celebrated acquittal.

That gear change, from first arrival to first resistance, is tangible.

So is the push for political and legal change which is captured in a 1975 photo taken at a Brixton Community Neighbourhood meeting.

It shows home secretary Roy Jenkins listening as activist Courtney Laws holds court.

With under 30 images on display from Kenlock's thousands-strong archive the exhibition is frustratingly short. There's clearly plenty more to come.

The Untold Story of Black British Community Leaders in the 1960s and 1970s. Black Cultural Archives, 1 Windrush Square, London, SW2 1EF. Tuesday to Saturday, 10am-6pm. Until 28 September. Free

EXHIBITION

HERSTORY: WOMEN ARTISTS FROM THE COLLECTION OF PATRIZIA SANDRETTI RE REBAUDENGO

Touchstones Rochdale. The Esplanade, OL16 1AQ
Until 29 September
Tickets up to £15

HERSTORY features artworks by some of the leading female artists of the last 40 years including Cindy Sherman, Barbara Kruger, Sherrie Levine, Mona Hatoum and Sarah Lucas.

The exhibition explores how they have radically



altered the face of contemporary art.

In addition to the works from Re Rebaudengo's collection, the exhibition showcases select items from Touchstone's art, museum and local history collections. It offers further resonance to some of the issues being addressed.

Jane Wilson

TELEVISION

BODYGUARD

BBC One, Sundays, 9pm

IF YOU enjoyed the TV drama *Line of Duty* then this new six-part series might be for you.

It's written by *Line Of Duty* creator Jed Mercurio and features several of the same actors.

However, a word of warning. The storyline is about a war veteran who is



now a Metropolitan Police security man. He's assigned to protect a "ruthless" female home secretary.

The two have different politics but are—entirely predictably in such a series—drawn to each other.

Helen Palmer

Too much farming in story of changing women's lives

FILM

THE GUARDIANS

Directed by Xavier Beauvois
On release

THE GUARDIANS is an interesting exploration—in the last 20 minutes—of how the First World War changed the role of women in the workplace and the family.

Before that it's mostly scenes of farming.

Beginning in 1915, the film follows the Hortense family and their young farm hand Francine. They hire her to replace their

men who have gone off to fight in the war.

For most of the film the trenches seem pretty far removed from the lives of the women and older men left behind. But reminders that France is at war are interspersed at infrequent intervals.

In one scene families wait in terror in a church as the priest reads out the names of those killed at the front that week.

While this pattern is probably an accurate reflection of how the war was for people in rural areas, it probably doesn't



Iris Bry plays a farm hand

need to go on for almost two hours.

However, if you like scenes of picturesque French countryside, you should enjoy this film.

Plus it does manage to avoid falling into annoying war film romance stereotypes.

It shows how the independence women gained during the war led many of them, particularly the young, to begin to challenge traditional roles.

The film also explores the ways in which this was tied up with class.

The image of women

pulling together throughout most of the film begins to fray and it becomes clear that they have diverging interests.

It also avoids French nationalism. In one scene former school teacher Constant looks distinctly uncomfortable as his ex-pupils read him a poem about crushing Germans.

The film's main problem is that much of it is made up of farming scenes that often don't add anything to the plot. You just sit there for five minutes as someone milks a cow.

Bethan Turner

N 1976 a group of women workers struck for equal pay—and won. The 21-week walkout became the longest successful strike for equal pay in Britain. But many people have never heard of it.

Now a new book, *Trico—a Victory to Remember*, is determined that they do. “Women at Trico put up a fight and won,” it says. “Let that be the inspiration for future generations to follow.”

Trico was a car components factory in Brentford, west London. Workers there produced windscreens, wiper arms and blades, wiper motors and washers, and other accessories.

Britain’s major car makers—including Ford, Vauxhall and Leyland—all relied on Trico. It had cornered most of the market.

The strike came months after the Equal Pay Act came into force. Yet women were still being paid less than men for the same work. And in disputes, equal pay tribunals overwhelmingly found in favour of the bosses, as they did with Trico.

Striker Monica Harvey told Socialist Worker at the time, “We won a complete victory. What a bloody mockery this makes of the decision of the equal pay tribunal.

“They said we had no case—but we’ve shown otherwise. A strong shop-floor organisation is worth a million Equal Pay Acts.”

Socialist Worker said, “The message is simple. Ignore the tribunals. The only way to be certain of winning is by strong and determined industrial action.”

Several generations of families often worked at the factory. And it was mixed. Striker Peggy Farmer remembers, “There were people from the Caribbean and Africa, Indian, Polish all sorts. Everyone got on.”

The factory employed over 1,000 men. Many worked the night shift and so got an extra premium payment. But they also earned around £6.50 a week more than women because they had a higher piecework rate.

When bosses announced they were “phasing out” the night shift in 1975, five men moved onto the day shift. And the difference in pay came to light.

Negotiate

Striker Eric Fudge explained, “We weren’t aware that the piecework rate was higher than the women’s. It was only when looking at the pay slips that someone noticed.

“Most of the women weren’t happy and I agreed with them.”

The workers’ AUEW union tried to negotiate for equal pay. But Trico argued that women weren’t doing the same work, because the men were more “flexible”. It suggested cutting men’s wages to the women’s rate.

Another idea was to freeze men’s wages so that future rises for women would eventually level out pay. As the book argues, it was “absurd”.

“Spontaneous stoppages” occurred in February 1976 on the washer assembly line. The

One of the most successful strikes for equal pay was fought at a car components factory in 1976. Sadie Robinson welcomes a new book that revives this vital struggle



authors note that, “Stewards restored order by explaining that negotiating procedures must be used first.”

Eventually the anger boiled over.

On 24 May 1976 the union called a lunchtime meeting, which heard that the firm had “no intention of implementing equal pay”.

But around 200 women stayed after the meeting closed. Women who had headed back to work returned, and the meeting

“

A Sun reporter was chased off after the paper claimed the women were on ‘sex strike’

resumed. It overwhelmingly backed an all-out strike.

“The women from now on were on strike—and 98 weren’t even members of a union,” says the book. “Dazed and incredulous, they began to wonder what their decision would mean.”

Around 15 men joined the strike immediately. But the vast majority remained inside. Some said it was nothing to do with them. Others had a sexist attitude towards the women.

The men who had kept working held a 24-hour strike on 2 June. But they voted by 60 percent against an all-out strike. The authors describe how some Nazis had tried to organise among them.

Over 1,000 workers stayed in the factory, while nearly 400 women struck. But the book explains that women were “the key workers. Without them, no production line could move. The factory was brought to a progressive standstill.”

This was crucial. But the union leadership didn’t push hard for it. As Monica said, “When did our president, Hugh Scanlon, make a public appeal for the blacking of all wiper blades by the car industry?”

“Had he and other members of the executive put their muscle behind the struggle, we would have won much sooner.”

The authors note that the boycotting of wipers wasn’t “robustly effective nationally” due to “the absence of any official instructions from the AUEW National Executive Committee”. It adds that official support for the strike was sometimes “on a knife-edge”.

And while some Labour MPs gave their backing, some felt Labour “in general gave the strike little to no formal recognition as being significant”.

Bosses, the press and the cops worked together against the strikers.

Cops ignored scab lorries that had covered number plates, and positioned their cars in front of pickets’ vehicles to stop them following the scabs. One Sun reporter was chased off the picket line after the paper claimed the women were on “sex strike”.

The union estimated that the strike was costing Trico more than £20,000 a day—more than £100,000 today. Bosses were reduced to trying to sneak out products and smuggle in supplies by car.

But this couldn’t overcome the impact of the strike. So they tried to break through picket lines.

On 1 July at 2am a convoy of nine lorries and several private cars arrived. Four pickets were on duty. Six lorry drivers turned around but three went in.

Support

Pickets had to get more organised—and pull in more solidarity. The night picket grew and “became one of the best-known clubs in London,” says the book. Different groups supported it on different nights.

These included local factories, Brent Trades Council, Ealing North Labour Party, and the Gay Socialists. Sikh gurdwaras raised lots of money for strikers.

Support came from individuals too. The book describes how a man arrived “every night at 10.30pm, and again between 1am and 2.30am, with an urn of tea, sugar and milk”.

Workers who drove United Biscuits trucks would leave strikers’ packets of biscuits hidden behind cars.

Strikers scored a victory on 27 July after 70 pickets forced

a scab convoy to turn back. But two days later a bigger battle came. Coachloads of cops descended and attacked pickets to get the lorries through.

Strikers identified scab haulage firms and urged workers to boycott them. And they urged workers to black—refuse to handle—wipers and blades that were being made elsewhere for Trico.

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TRICHO THREW everything at the strikers. Bosses went to an equal pay tribunal in August, which found in their favour. They denied workers holiday pay and in September announced layoffs.

But by this point, the bosses’ Engineering Employers Federation was “running out of patience”. The fight was not going out of the women. The action showed no sign of ending.

Finally on 15 October, women heard that bosses had caved in, fully conceding their demands. They marched back to work on 18 October.

The book describes a “cheering mass of women and men clocking in with champagne, kisses and V-signs for victory”.

The strike challenged dominant attitudes about women and changed strikers’ ideas. Peggy Long told Women’s Voice, “I’ve learnt a lot, noticed a lot of things since I’ve been on strike.”

Bob Singh said, “It made me appreciate the strength of people being together. Women who were not political were able to do something historic.”

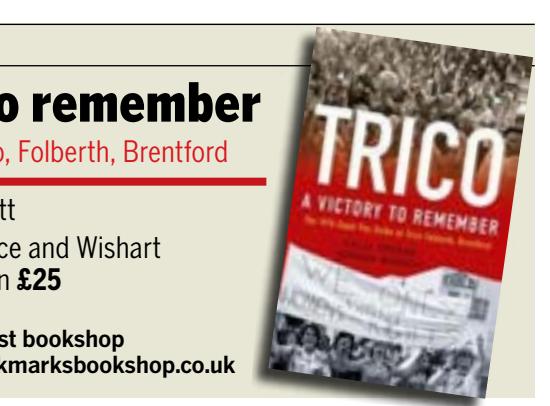
The story of Trico shows the



ON THE picket lines at Trico (above)

best way to fight and win—and can encourage others in struggle. Striker Ann Fitzgerald said, “Women saw that if we can do it, they can do it. People thought, we won’t sit back anymore.”

Rhoda Williams added, “I was proud of what I did. You never know, when people read the book, it might inspire them to do something.”



READ MORE

Trico: a victory to remember

The 1976 Equal Pay Strike at Trico, Folkestone, Kent

by Sally Groves and Vernon Merritt

Published in hardback by Lawrence and Wishart in association with the Unite union £25

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



WHAT SOCIALISTS SAY

Why criticising the burqa means lining up with racists



A PROTEST against the French ‘burqa’ ban in 2016

Some supposedly progressive liberals think it’s okay to line up with Islamophobes sometimes. It’s not

BORIS JOHNSON’S attack on the burqa has left some liberals with a problem.

They feel they must condemn his blatant Islamophobia. But because they are soft Islamophobes, they don’t want to come out clearly in defence of Muslim women.

There are some who accept Islamophobic arguments about the burqa.

Take Guardian columnist Polly Toynbee, who wrote last week, “What could be more dehumanising than the niqab and the burqa? Hiding a woman dehumanises her completely, turning a person into an anonymous thing.”

In the past Labour’s Emily Thornberry has said she wouldn’t want her child or elderly mother “looked after by somebody wearing a burqa”.

Johnson, Toynbee and Thornberry do not call for the burqa to be banned. But they all treat it as a problem—and by doing so imply that Islam is a particularly sexist and backward religion.

People should have the right to criticise religion. But at a time when Muslim women are under specific attack from the state, to criticise the burqa is to line up with the racists.

And when supposed progressives criticise the burqa, it gives more credibility to the more overt Islamophobes.

Some liberals see the burqa as a reflection of sexist ideas. This also treats the

In capitalist societies, all women are policed on what we wear

Socialists should defend a woman’s right to choose what she wears. That includes the right to wear a burqa—and the right not to wear one.

Forcing Muslim women to give up wearing veils, headscarves or burqas isn’t liberating, just as encouraging women to wear skimpy clothes isn’t. Instead it’s just another form of judging women on their appearance and dress, and taking control and choice away from them.

main source of oppression facing Muslim women as Muslim men. In fact, the main oppressor of Muslim women is the state.

For all the exhortations for Muslim women to integrate, Western governments have made it harder for them to do so. France, Denmark, Austria and Belgium are among the countries that have banned the hijab in public. This pushes Muslims away from wider society and tells them that they have no place in it.

In Britain, cuts to Eslol language classes leave vulnerable women more isolated. And Islamophobic comments, such as Johnson’s, treat Islam as a problem and encourage racist violence.

Western politicians shake their heads at what they assume to be sexism in Islam while presiding over deeply sexist societies and encouraging sexist ideas.

Women often say they choose to wear coverings to feel closer to Allah. It’s patronising to assume that every woman who wears a hijab, niqab or burqa has been told to do so by a man. This also treats the

Socialists should defend a woman’s right to choose what she wears. That includes the right to wear a burqa—and the right not to wear one.

Forcing Muslim women to give up wearing veils, headscarves or burqas isn’t liberating, just as encouraging women to wear skimpy clothes isn’t. Instead it’s just another form of judging women on their appearance and dress, and taking control and choice away from them.

Aretha Franklin left a legacy of struggle

by LIZ WHEATLEY

ON 16 February 1968 Aretha Franklin was in Detroit as the mayor declared it Aretha Franklin Day and Martin Luther King presented her with a special award.

King had laryngitis and was unable to speak. Yet his actions demonstrated how much Aretha had come to symbolise the cry for freedom, and how central she was to shaping black identity.

Aretha, who died last Thursday, had a beautiful, distinctive voice that was first heard in her father's baptist church.

She grew up in Detroit surrounded by gospel singers and from the age of 12 was touring with other gospel acts.

Secure

Although financially pretty secure, Aretha's early years weren't easy. She had her first child aged 12, had a second child, and had left school by 16.

She had a violently abusive marriage but Aretha was no

victim, and this came out in her songs.

Aretha demanded Respect for black people in the US when she made that Otis Redding song her anthem.

She was no stranger to the Civil Rights Movement. Her father had been one of the main organisers of Detroit's Walk to Freedom where King first spoke of his dream.

But she didn't set out to be an overtly political artist.

However, as she said herself, "I suppose the revolution influenced me a great deal."

Not only did she cover songs such as A Change Is Gonna Come and Young, Gifted And Black.

She also understood why Respect chimed with the movement for liberation.

"It was the need of the nation, the need of the average man and woman in the street. Everyone wanted respect," she said.

Behind the scenes, Aretha gave money to King.

When US radical Angela Davis was imprisoned, Aretha publicly offered to pay her bail saying, "Angela Davis must go free. Black people



ARETHA FRANKLIN, who died last week

will be free." By the 1970s, Aretha no longer looked like the lounge singer of her very earliest appearances.

Instead she had an afro and wore head wraps and African clothing.

Confidence

She epitomised the developing sense of confidence and black pride.

She signed with Atlantic records in 1966 and producer Jerry Wexler took her to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, for a recording session.

The session resulted in the single I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Loved You), and eventually the album of the same name.

About a decade ago, a double album of the Muscle Shoals session, Aretha Franklin: Rare and Unreleased Recordings from the Golden Reign, was released.

If you haven't got them, go and buy them both.

This was followed by albums such as Lady Soul and Spirit In The Dark, five consecutive top ten singles and the first of 18 Grammy awards. Aretha became the

first woman to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Rolling Stone magazine declared her the greatest singer of all time.

Live At Fillmore West is one of the best live albums produced.

I saw her ten years ago and can still remember every minute of the gig, so fantastic was her voice.

She sang at Barack Obama's inauguration, which I've always hoped would mean a new generation would explore her music.

Aretha Franklin offers us a vision of a history of struggle and helps us aspire to a future that could be very different.

Her voice and songs contributed to larger political and social movements.

Angela Davis said her legacy should not be "measured by political interventions in the conventional sense.

"Her creative work helped to shape and deepen a collective consciousness anchored in a yearning for freedom."

For a longer version go to bit.ly/Areradical

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Syriza agrees decades of austerity as bailout ends

The final bailout agreement in Greece is over. The deals saw eight years of austerity—but cuts are set to continue until at least 2060, reports **Nick Clark**

GREECE exited its final bailout agreement on Monday—the mechanism through which the European Union (EU) and the bankers have forced austerity on ordinary Greeks.

For more than eight years Greek governments have received loans from the EU, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank—the “Troika”.

In return they have imposed deep cuts and pro-market reforms.

In the last three years, these attacks were imposed by a government led by the once-radical left wing party Syriza. Now, with the last instalment of the third and final bailout paid, the Greek government is supposedly in charge of its own finances again.

But this is not the end of austerity. The Troika still wants to be sure that Greece can repay the loans, totalling £233 billion.

That's not expected to be fully repaid until 2060. Until then the EU will send inspectors to Greece every three months to see that the government is on course to hit strict economic “targets”.

Surplus

So Syriza has agreed that the government will run a budget surplus—spend less money than it gets through taxes—every year until 2060.

To make sure they keep getting their money, Greece's EU creditors won't count debt repayments as part of the country's outgoings.

But a budget surplus means more cuts for ordinary people.

Greeks have suffered devastating cuts to their pensions, jobs, wages, benefits and services.

Austerity is widely blamed for the

poor emergency responses to recent wildfires and floods that have killed scores of people.

Funding for public hospitals has been slashed by well over 50 percent since 2009. Health care workers, teachers and council workers now all fight for the government to end chronic understaffing.

Pension cuts have pushed almost half of Greek pensioners below the poverty line. And some pensioners could lose up to £314 a month more when new cuts are imposed at the start of next year.

Meanwhile unemployment stands at 20 percent—and 42 percent for people under 25.

So while European finance ministers triumphantly proclaim “the end of the Greek crisis,” there's no end to the crisis for ordinary people.

That's why Syriza is in trouble, lagging behind the Tory New Democracy party in opinion polls. In one recent poll New Democracy came almost 10 percent ahead of Syriza.

The next Greek general election has to take place no later than 20 October next year—but could happen sooner.

New Democracy has cynically used the crisis following the wildfires, as well as the bailout exit, to call for a snap election.

It's a sorry fate for the Syriza party that was once the hope of people fighting austerity across the world.

It should also be a warning to a future left wing Labour government in Britain.

On other pages...

Anger at the response to the floods hitting India >>Page 8

Don't do deals with Troika

SYRIZA WAS elected to lead Greece's government in January 2015. It was associated with the anti-austerity movement, which had seen mass protests, riots—and 32 general strikes since 2010.

The Troika demanded that Greece accept a third bailout loan—complete with austerity conditions.

They wanted to make an example of Syriza for daring to challenge austerity.

They piled economic pressure onto Syriza, including cutting off support for Greece's banks.

Syriza climbed down and accepted



Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras

the new bailout, but held a referendum on the terms of the deal. Ordinary people rejected it with a big “No” vote in July 2015.

The government could have used this collective political strength to hit back at the Troika.

But Syriza saw the vote—which its leaders had hoped would accept the deal—as little more than a bargaining chip.

It ended up implementing an even worse austerity plan than the one voters had rejected.

Syriza thought it could work within the system to change it. That strategy changed it from a party that rejected austerity, to one that accepted its logic.

GREEKS PROTEST against an austerity deal in 2015

Blame bosses and bankers

GREECE WAS one of the countries hardest hit by the financial crisis that began in 2008.

That crisis started when the bosses' system of loaning and borrowing—money that didn't really exist—collapsed.

Yet the media, politicians and bankers still often like to blame ordinary Greek people.

They say the Greek government was borrowing to spend too much on “generous” pensions for instance, or that people's living standards were too high.

In reality Greeks worked some of the longest hours for some of the lowest wages in Europe.

Bankers didn't see borrowing

by Greece's government as a problem—in fact it was positively encouraged.

When the euro was introduced, banks and investors flooded the poorer countries with cheap credit which tied them to richer countries such as Germany.

The cost of living rose in Greece during this period—by 35 percent between 2000 and 2008.

When the crash hit, the bankers called in their debts.

Greece's economy shrank and bankers feared it wouldn't be able to pay back the loans.

The bailouts were really about rescuing the banks—and making ordinary people pay for it.



Betrayals boost the right wing

TORY New Democracy politicians have tried to turn anger at Syriza rightwards with nationalist campaigns.

And the Nazi party Golden Dawn recently called for a coup in parliament (pictured).

There have been more attacks on migrants, often by breakaway Nazi groups. But there is also anti-fascist resistance.



Refugees face more misery

Syria's capitulation has seen Greek islands become home to huge prison camps for refugees.

Refugee camps are dangerously overcrowded.

But a deal signed between Greece and Germany last week will make it worse.

The German government will use a massive EU database of refugee fingerprints to deport asylum seekers back to Greece.



Wildfire deaths were avoidable

RECENT wildfires in Greece killed 96 people. The deaths were avoidable.

Years of austerity meant deep cuts to the fire brigade, emergency services and forest protection.

Civil protection minister Nikos Toskas resigned after the fires.

IN BRIEF

FT journalists could take action over pay

THE CHIEF executive of the Financial Times newspaper has promised to hand back a £510,000 pay rise after outcry from journalists in the NUJ union.

Members of the NUJ at the Financial Times slammed the high pay of chief executive John Riddings. They called for pay increases for trainee staff and action to fix the gender pay gap.

A motion welcomed Riddings' decision to hand his rise back. But it said journalists could take industrial action if their other demands aren't met.

Kurds protest over Turkey state killing

AROUND 50 Kurdish people protested over the Turkish state killing of Kurdish leader Zeki Sengali in Wood Green, north London, on Sunday.

Sengali was killed in an airstrike in the Sinjar region of Iraq last Wednesday.

Paul Burnham

Workers fight for pay justice

WORKERS IN the GMB union at the Ministry of Justice have overwhelmingly rejected a paltry pay offer.

Some 81.6 percent of members rejected the offer on a 76 percent turnout.

George Georgiou, GMB National Officer, said, "This result confirms our suspicions and reflects the often angrily voiced view of GMB members.

"This deal represents a retrograde step for them in terms of pay, conditions and working hours."

Animal feed drivers ballot over shifts

DRIVERS AT an agricultural firm in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, are preparing to ballot for strikes over attacks on working hours.

Bosses at AB Agriculture—an animal feed firm—want to change shift patterns to force drivers to work two Saturdays in four.

Unite union regional officer Steve Harley blasted the bosses for "an undiluted attack" on the work-life balance.

TGI strike day, say restaurant workers

UNITE UNION members at three sites of the TGI Fridays restaurant chain were set to strike on Friday of this week as part of their ongoing fight over tips.

The three sites are Milton Keynes, Covent Garden in central London, and Stratford City in east London.

The dispute began when bosses told workers that tips taken by card payments would go to kitchen staff, not just waiters.

JUSTICE FOR GRENFELL



HUNDREDS OF people joined the monthly Silent Walk for Grenfell on Tuesday of last week. The marches mark the day the fire ripped through Grenfell Tower in west London killing at least 72 people.

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

EDUCATION

Corrupt head made to pay back thousands

by SADIE ROBINSON

A FORMER head teacher and his former colleagues have been ordered to pay back thousands of pounds they unlawfully received from a west London school.

Alan Davies was the head teacher of Copland Community School in Wembley, Brent, which became the Ark Elvin Academy in September 2014. He paid himself £400,000 in just one year.

Workers in the NUT, NASUWT and ATL unions staged several strikes in 2013 and 2014 against the academy plan.

The High Court found last week that Davies and others benefited from "vast sums" they received in illicit bonuses from the school over a number of years.

The others are former deputy head Richard Evans, former HR manager Michele McKenzie and former school bursar Columbus Udkoro.

Davies had previously been knighted for services to education.



Disgraced former head teacher Alan Davies

He was convicted of false accounting in 2013 and stripped of his knighthood in 2014.

The court last week said that his justifications for the payments were "patently untrue" and "false".

And the judge criticised the former chair of governors Indravadan Patel and former vice chair of governors Martin Day, who sanctioned the bonuses.

Justice Zacaroli said they had shown "reckless indifference" and had carried out a "dishonest breach of

fiduciary duty". The court found that Davies, Patel and Day had breached their duties to the council, leading to losses of over £1 million.

Evans, Udkoro and McKenzie were found to have been in knowing receipt of payments arising from those breaches of duties.

A further hearing in October will decide how much each of the six must pay back.

Campaigner Hank Roberts, who is a member of the NEU union's joint executive council, was the original whistle blower.

He said, "I and the other school reps were suspended by Davies and faced dismissal charges after I blew the whistle.

"Later we were reinstated. I, the unions and the council have been totally vindicated."

He added, "This is occurring far too often, especially in academies that have inadequate systems of financial oversight and control.

"To lessen this corruption, all academies should be brought back under local authority control."

PAY

Red card over pay for footballer's firm

A FORMER education services boss is refusing to pay two workers money they are owed—despite an employment tribunal instructing him to do so.

The two NEU union members worked at Middlesbrough Alternative Provisions (Map) Ltd, owned by ex-Manchester City footballer Jamie Pollock.

Pollock terminated their employment in January with just one week's notice.

In May an employment

tribunal ruled that the firm was in breach of contract.

This was its failure to pay the staff notice pay, repay wages that had been unlawfully deducted and failure to give them itemised salary slips.

It ordered Map Ltd to pay one worker £3,106 and the other £1,934. But neither has received any money.

In March, Pollock had applied to Companies House to have the firm dissolved.

Joint general secretary

of the NEU Mary Bousted said, "We will not back down until our members get what is rightfully theirs."

■ THE SCOTTISH teachers' union EIS has called a national demonstration in support of a 10 percent pay claim. It will take place in Glasgow on Saturday 27 October.

It has also said "members will be asked to consider strike action if agreement cannot be reached".

WORKING CLASS HISTORY

March to remember rail strike martyrs in Llanelli

AROUND 200 people marched through Llanelli last Saturday to mark the anniversary of the 1911 national rail strike.

Workers in the west Wales town rose in revolt after troops opened fire and killed pickets.

Caroline Goffin is a relative of Leonard Worsell, one of the workers who was shot. "I'm so thankful that Llanelli remembers past heartaches and is inspired to change the future," she said.

RMT rail union senior assistant general secretary Steve Hedley was the keynote speaker at the rally.

"The ruling class didn't give in to the railway strike after two days because there were reasonable people sitting around a table with

them," he said. "They gave up because there were trains being dynamited, there were magistrates' shops and offices being ransacked. We need to put fear in them now."

This year's march was a significant event for the Welsh left and coincided with leadership elections in Labour and Plaid Cymru.

Labour leadership candidate Mark Drakeford and incumbent Plaid Cymru leader Leanne Wood spoke at the rally. They both identified themselves with socialist politics and workers' struggle.

All speakers talked about the dangers of the far right and pledged to mobilise against fascist Tommy Robinson.

Martin Chapman

ANTI-RACISM



ALL WERE welcome at the carnival celebrating the diversity of the Govanhill district of Glasgow last Saturday. Community groups, drummers, dancers, jugglers, roller skaters, brass bands and many more weaved their way through the streets.

PICTURE: DUNCAN BROWN

POST

Anger over bullying bosses grows at Royal Mail depots

A POSTAL workers' union leader has responded after a series of unofficial strikes over workplace bullying and harassment at a number of Royal Mail workplaces.

Terry Pullinger, deputy general secretary of the CWU union, said workers were "absolutely right" to walk out against workplace bullying. It comes after walkouts over allegations of management bullying at Royal Mail delivery offices in Plymouth, Grimsby, and Ferndale, South Wales.

Royal Mail workers increasingly face pressure from managers to work more efficiently, or take on greater workloads through re-organisations of how work is shared out.

In a video posted to Facebook last Thursday Pullinger said, "If people are being bullied in the workplace and you genuinely believe that then you are absolutely right to bring it to a head."

But he added that CWU



members should try and resolve disputes through negotiations before taking action. And he said the union had completed an audit in workplaces that he hoped would show where there are problems to be fixed.

It's part of an agreement between the CWU and Royal Mail bosses to bring about a "cultural change" in workplaces in a recent deal.

Yet the walkouts and Pullinger's video are signs that there is widespread anger among Royal Mail workers at management bullying.

RAIL

Battle for safety on South Western rail

by SARAH BATES

RAIL WORKERS are still fighting to stop transport bosses axing guards from services.

RMT union members on South Western Railway (SWR) have so far struck for five days in August, including last Saturday.

They are due to walk out again this Saturday and next Monday.

Workers on Northern-owned by Arriva Rail North—planned to join the action and strike on Saturday this week, 1 and 8 September.

They are rejoining the fray after negotiations about the role of the guard broke down and fresh strike days were called.

Serious

The action involves conductors, conductor instructors and train drivers.

Bosses want to roll out more Driver Only Operated (DOO) services.

But these services threaten the future of guards, or similar onboard staff, who ensure train travel is safe and accessible for all.

DOO trains mean that emergencies such as evacuations, driver incapacity, fires or derailment could end in



PICKETING AT Waterloo station last Saturday

complete disaster. And guards can help passengers with disabilities to embark and disembark safely—without this assistance many would simply be unable to travel.

Strikers are fighting for a guarantee that a second safety-critical trained member of staff will be on board at all times.

But bosses have only

offered assurances of DOO trains running with guards—and their promises come with caveats that allow bosses to run trains without guards if there aren't enough staff.

Train bosses are desperate to roll out DOO because it is cheaper for them, and it undermines the principle of passenger and worker safety.

Strikers should be

supported in their struggle for a transport system that is fit for purpose.

■ **RMT MEMBERS** at Exeter Media, the firm that does advertising on public transport networks, are to ballot for strikes over pay. The union says that members have been offered a “derisory pay offer”.

HUNDREDS OF health workers at Mid Yorkshire NHS Trust were celebrating last week after bosses dumped plans to outsource their jobs.

The bosses' retreat came after the Unison union members threatened to walk out for three days from Monday this week.

Bosses said they had stopped “all work on the formation of a wholly-owned subsidiary”. This would have seen cleaners, caterers, maintenance workers and other support staff outsourced across Pinderfields, Pontefract and Dewsbury hospitals.

While the trust would be the sole shareholder, the wholly-owned subsidiary would have been a bridgehead

to full-blown privatisation.

The aim is to undermine wages and conditions to make the NHS more attractive for the private sector.

The win at Mid Yorkshire Trust comes after a series of strikes in Wigan forced bosses to back down from setting up a wholly-owned subsidiary.

The Wigan dispute has made bosses fearful of trying to push through this dangerous new form of privatisation.

Health unions at other trusts trying to set up wholly-owned subsidiaries should ballot their members for strikes.

They should also oppose job cuts and worse conditions that are proposed as the price for staying in-house.

PAY

HEALTH WORKERS in Scotland have voted to accept a three-year pay deal.

Some 94 percent of Unison union members who voted accepted the 9 percent pay rise across 2018 to 2021. Unite union members backed it by 71 percent.

The GMB union has rejected the offer. The union's senior organiser Drew Duffy said, “We campaigned for an above-inflation offer and measures to tackle a decade of cuts.

“The truth is that 3 percent, 2.7 percent and 2.6 percent does not equal 9 percent, nor does it begin to match the cost of living.”

It is still better than the rotten pay deal for NHS England workers that was cobbled together by leaders of most health unions and the Tories.

As the details of that deal become real to workers, there is anger about what it means.

EALING

DOZENS OF people rallied outside Ealing Town Hall in west London last Thursday against plans to hand over community health services to convicted fraudster Richard Branson.

His Virgin Care company is bidding for the Community Health Services contract, which includes children's and mental health services.

Eve Turner from Ealing Save Our NHS said, “The record of private companies trying to run NHS services has been terrible.

“Ealing Clinical Commissioning Group should withdraw the contract and the NHS should get the support it needs instead of wasting millions of pounds paying management consultants to devise projects like this.”

Labour MPs Rupa Huq and Labour council leader Julian Bell joined the protesters.

CRANES

UNITE AND GMB members at Liebherr's Cranes in Sunderland have escalated their dispute after management failed to improve their pay offer.

Workers plan to strike from Monday to Thursday for the next four weeks.

Bosses have resorted to divide and rule tactics. Managers tried to exclude

the Unite union shop steward from talks and negotiate only with the GMB union. The GMB rightly rejected this move.

A number of steel wagons have refused to cross the picket lines.

● Donations and messages of support to Mark.Sanderson@unitetheunion.org and Sunderland@gmb.org.uk

CHEQUE WORKERS

Signed up for cheque strike

A SIX-WEEK programme of strikes is set to begin at a cheque operations base in Crewe, hitting the supply of cheques and chequebooks.

Some 79 workers at Communis are fighting over pay. A deal would mean a 2 percent rise in year one, and a 3 percent rise in both years two and three. Workers voted by 78 percent to strike on a 90 percent turnout.

An initial 48-hour strike is planned for Tuesday and Wednesday next week. This will be followed by strikes every Monday and Tuesday for the following six weeks.

Unite regional officer Darren Barton said, “The strike action will inevitably create delays for bank customers, however our members have endured years of below inflation pay increases.”

OIL RIGS

Action in North Sea

WORKERS AT three oil and gas platforms in the North Sea operated by Total struck on Monday. This week's strike is the fifth industrial action at the Alwyn, Elgin, and Dunbar platforms since 23 July.

Total wants to place workers at the platforms on a three-week rotation system instead of two.

The fields hit by the strikes account for some 10 percent of Britain's gas production. Crude oil production at Alwyn, Elgin, and Dunbar pumps up to 50,000 barrels per day to the Forties and Brent Blend crude streams.

Further strikes are set for 3 and 17 September.

JOHN LENNON AIRPORT

Power to the people

WORKERS AT Liverpool's John Lennon airport were set to strike over the bank holiday weekend.

GMB union members have rejected the company's below-inflation pay offer of 2 percent and are demanding at least 3.6 percent.

A total of 80 workers from aviation rescue and firefighting services, the control room, engineering and driver operations and airport bird control are set to walk out.

The 36-hour strike was due to begin at 7pm on Thursday this week and continue until 7am on Saturday.

This will be followed by a further 12-hour strike beginning at 7am on Monday 3 September.

Further strike dates are set to follow.

CIVIL SERVICE

Back Godrich to be the left candidate in union election

THE CIVIL service workers' PCS union is urging its members who work for the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to reject a pay plan tied to cuts to working conditions.

This is an important battle that could encourage wider pay resistance.

Meanwhile Socialist Workers Party (SWP) members are supporting Janice Godrich to be the candidate backed by the Left Unity group in a forthcoming election for assistant general secretary in the union.

Godrich is standing against incumbent assistant general secretary Chris Baugh, who also wants the nomination of Left Unity.

In a statement released on Sunday, PCS members in the SWP called for the election to

“be run on a vision for the kind of union we want rather than allegations and counter-claims which do nothing to build the left.”

The statement put the election campaign in the context of the union's fight to beat low pay for civil service workers.

“The recent PCS pay campaign shows the huge potential for a serious fight against this government and for rebuilding the activist base in the union.

“We should go all out to try for action over this year's pay within groups and bargaining units.”

Elections matter, but struggle matters more.

● Read the full statement online at bit.ly/SWPonPCSelection

Care strikers defy bosses' scheming

Birmingham home care workers have thrown themselves into the fight, reports **Sarah Bates**

CARE WORKERS in Birmingham have vowed to carry on striking until they save their service from total destruction.

The low-paid women workers are fighting job cuts and bosses' plans to force them onto part time hours.

Over 270 Unison union members began a four-day strike last Sunday, following five days of action earlier this month.

They plan to strike for another five days from Tuesday of next week—and members voted unanimously at a meeting to call more action for September.

The home carers have been picketing Birmingham council's Central Administrative Buildings—where up to 80 strikers have leafleted other council workers.

Senior Unison steward and home carer Mandy Buckley told Socialist Worker that mass activity was the key to keeping momentum during the action. "We've done so

SOLIDARITY

Here's how you can support the strikers

- Send solidarity messages or ask for strikers to speak at your union branch. Email info@birminghamunison.co.uk
- Donate to support the strikers—make cheques payable to "Birmingham Unison" and make clear it's for the hardship fund. Send to McLaren building, 35 Dale End, Birmingham, B4 7LN

much," she said. "We've had a film screening of *Made in Dagenham*.

"Tomorrow members are going out leafletting the streets, neighbourhoods and shopping centres.

"They want to be so active, people even want to go out leafletting after a meeting ends at 10pm."

The carers work alone and Mandy said the strike

is an opportunity for the whole workforce to organise together.

"We are united, we are a team together," she said. "The north and south team are striking together, and bosses can't say others aren't striking because we're meeting each other."

The home enablement team is a free council-run service that supports people in their own homes following discharge from hospital.

But the Labour-run council has unleashed a series of attacks on the service, including job cuts and proposals for a punishing new shift rota.

Workers have said that management used heavy handed tactics to force through a voluntary redundancy (VR) programme that reduced the workforce by almost half.

And Mandy said bosses are "trying to push a VR trawl".

Fuelling

The severity of the attacks are fuelling workers' determination to keep fighting.

Strikers are worried that bosses want to hollow the service out, ready to be privatised.

This means the action is solid, and Mandy said "only a handful" have broken the strike and returned to work.

Although there are rumours of talks going on in the background, Mandy said carers will "carry on striking until everything's written down in black and white".

Council bosses reneged on an earlier promise to introduce "self-roster"—a system where workers pick their own shifts. So strikers are wary of halting action before victory.

"We're not stopping until we get a result", said Mandy.

"There's so many of us on strike and we're sticking together. This is something we haven't done before, but we know this is what we've got to do to win".

Glasgow council workers could strike for equal pay

THOUSANDS OF workers in Glasgow are preparing to build a huge result in a strike ballot that is part of a fight for equal pay.

The strikes could involve 5,200 members of the Unison and GMB unions. They have been fighting Glasgow City Council (GCC) for a decade over an unfair pay structure that meant women were paid less than men.

After years of delays, GCC—run by the SNP—voted in January to resolve the dispute.

But in August they walked away from

negotiations to decide the formula for compensation, and said the next settlement negotiation would be in November.

The workers are only this close to victory because they have fought the council every step of the way.

Demonstrations and meetings have forced bosses to promise to resolve the dispute.

A possible strike from two sectors is an important step forward.

But the unions should put everything into winning ballots in all sections involved.



A HOME care worker at a recent strike rally

PICTURE: GEOFF DEXTER

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

Cries against austerity in Dundee

OVER 15,000 people joined an All Under One Banner march for Scottish independence in Dundee last Saturday.

It was the latest of a series of marches across Scotland that will culminate in Edinburgh on 6 October.

In Dundee a majority voted for independence in 2016 and the Scottish National Party (SNP)-led council is implementing Tory cuts. The march revealed important contradictions.

The local NHS is in crisis and has been taken over by the Scottish government.

The city centre is being expensively renovated but



The march last Saturday

call is seen by many as a way of moving towards a different sort of society.

But there are questions about whether the SNP is the answer.

Many ask if the SNP will actually hold a second independence referendum, or whether it will be indefinitely postponed.

The campaign for Scottish independence has to be linked firmly to class struggle.

The greater the confidence to defeat the Tories' cuts, the greater the support for independence grows.

Carlo Morelli